

## PSYCHE.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., NOV. 1880.

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## SOME RECENT PUBLICATIONS ON FOSSIL INSECTS.

It is not often that we can record any considerable accession to the literature of fossil insects, and therefore it is worth while to call attention to the writings of Mr. Goss, of England, upon this subject, whose papers,\* appearing at intervals during the past three years, not only form an important contribution, but, now that they are completed, have a unity and completeness worthy of remark.

They make no pretension to originality, but are a pains-taking compilation of general results reached by a broad survey of the literature, with full references, which show that no important contribution to the subject, and scarcely a minor tract, whether in Europe or America, has escaped the vigilance of the author.

As completed, Mr. Goss's essays form two series; one of three essays, first published in the *Proceedings of the geologists' association*; the other of twelve minor papers, which originally appeared by instalments in the *Entomologists' monthly magazine*, and have since been issued as a separate tract. The first series consists of 128 pages, and the second of 50 pages, both in octavo. Both treat the sub-

\* Goss, Herbert. Three papers on fossil insects, and the British and foreign formations in which insect remains have been detected. No. 1. The insect fauna of the recent and tertiary periods. No. 2. of the secondary or mesozoic period. No. 3. of the primary or paleozoic period. From the *Proceedings of the geologists' association*, vols. 5-6. [London, 1878-1880.] 89.

Goss, Herbert. The geological antiquity of insects. Twelve papers on fossil entomology. London, 1880. 89.

ject from a geological standpoint, i. e., each geological formation is separately considered, — in the first series in a descending, in the second in an ascending order. They differ however in that the papers of the first series enter more fully into details concerning the insects, and have appended to them lists, for the earlier periods of the species, for the later periods of the genera of known forms; the lists are bare catalogs under the mention of the papers in which they are treated. The second series of papers consists, as it were, of an abstract of the other, but is also accompanied by very full references to the papers (in foot notes), and by statements, for each formation, of the progress of vegetable and of other animal life, for comparison with the advance in development of insect types. Our author here wisely chooses the ascending instead of the descending order, as in the other series, where the order was less material.

The success which has attended this venture of Mr. Goss in a difficult field, in which he has shown great carefulness and industry, lead us to hope — the more that he is known as an entomologist, rather than as a geologist — that, if he will not join the all too feeble band of original investigators in the field, he will at least complete the picture by treating the entire subject from an entomological standpoint.

Samuel H. Scudder.

## REVIEW.

CECIL'S BOOKS of natural history, by Prof. S. H. Peabody [see Rec., no. 1982], consist of carefully prepared short chapters on the more important general groups of the higher animals, illustrated with well-executed wood-cut plates, and are a valuable contribution to the too small number of popular and interesting American works upon natural history for children.

They treat, to a greater extent than has hitherto unfortunately been usual in American books of this class, of the indigenous insects, which children can be led to observe for themselves, and convey a large amount of accurate information in a form that can easily be understood.

B: P. M.